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**Cc:** Okubo, Janice S.[janice.okubo@doh.hawaii.gov]; keith.kawaoka@doh.hawaii.gov[keith.kawaoka@doh.hawaii.gov]  
**From:** Tauyan, Agnes T CIV CNRH, N00PA  
**Sent:** Tue 11/3/2015 8:09:41 PM  
**Subject:** RE: Red Hill Task Force - Star Advertiser may be calling about meeting  
[smime.p7s](#)

Thank you for the heads up, Dean. Vicki called us as well for basically our feedback on Saturday's article by Gordon Pang from the task force meeting. She mentioned working on something for Wednesday's paper.

Mahalo!  
Agnes

Ms. Agnes T. Tauyan  
Director, Public Affairs  
Navy Region Hawaii/  
Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific

(b) (6)

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-----Original Message-----

From: Higuchi, Dean [mailto:Higuchi.Dean@epa.gov]  
Sent: Monday, November 02, 2015 1:33 PM  
To: Tauyan, Agnes T CIV CNRH, N00PA; keith.kawaoka@doh.hawaii.gov  
Cc: Okubo, Janice S.  
Subject: Red Hill Task Force - Star Advertiser may be calling about meeting

Hi Agnes, Keith,

Vicki Viotti of the Star Advertiser may be calling as she called me to try to clarify what was in their story below. A lot was about the numbers and where the monitoring was. I told her a lot of the confusion seems to be about what water is showing petroleum constituents.

I also sent her our FAQ which address the this very issue on page 2 (See attached and pasted below). Think she was trying to make sense about all the monitoring results that were talked about in the Task Force Meeting.

Is my drinking water safe?

Yes, the drinking water is safe for human consumption for both Board of Water Supply customers and military communities. The water for Board of Water Supply customers and military communities is being tested every three months to assure the water is safe.

Contamination related to the Facility has never been detected in the Honolulu Board of Water Supply drinking water sources.

What is the likelihood of a future catastrophic release at the Facility?

A catastrophic release from the Facility into groundwater is very unlikely. The tanks are constructed in solid rock and consist of 2.5 to 4 feet thick reinforced concrete and a steel plate. Major earth movement that would rupture a tank at the Facility is highly unlikely due to the construction of the tanks and the relatively low earthquake threat on Oahu. The most likely catastrophic release scenario would be a piping failure with a release into the lower access tunnel. This vulnerability is being addressed by the Navy and DLA with the installation of oil tight doors in the tunnel system, along with a new fire suppression system to reduce the threat of a release caused by fire. Furthermore, the piping in the lower tunnel system is not buried or concealed and is visually inspected daily.

Has contamination been found in the groundwater beneath the Facility?

Some contamination has been found in the groundwater immediately below the Facility.

To date, some of these groundwater samples have exceeded the DOH's screening levels, but no samples have exceeded federal drinking water standards. The characteristics of the geology surrounding the tanks and depth to groundwater (approximately 100 feet) may be significantly limiting the vertical migration of contamination at the Facility.

Red Hill aquifer polluted, city says

The Navy disagrees and says the area's drinking water is not in jeopardy

By Gordon Y.K. Pang <mailto:gordonpang@staradvertiser.com>

POSTED: 1:30 a.m. HST, Oct 31, 2015

[http://www.staradvertiser.com/newspremium/Red\\_Hill\\_acquifer\\_polluted\\_city\\_says.html?id=339112532](http://www.staradvertiser.com/newspremium/Red_Hill_acquifer_polluted_city_says.html?id=339112532)

The Honolulu Board of Water Supply's manager said Friday that water tested in the aquifer below the Red Hill Underground Fuel Storage Tank Facility is contaminated, pointing out that a monitoring well showed elevated levels of jet fuel components in April - 15 months after a spill of about 27,000 gallons of fuel in January 2014.

But Navy Capt. Dean Tufts, regional engineer for Navy Region Hawaii, said the reading was not proof that jet fuel had leaked into the aquifer and noted that subsequent tests showed no elevated levels.

The disagreement between the Navy and city water officials is the latest in the debate about how worried the public should be about the leak's impact on Oahu's groundwater supply.

The statements were made at a meeting of the Red Hill Task Force on Friday - a meeting that was not even supposed to address the Red Hill leak. An Environmental Protection Agency Administrative Order on Consent aimed at ensuring Oahu's water resources are kept safe, agreed to by various federal and state agencies, was supposed to end the task force's work on the issue.

But the state Legislature last year asked that the task force continue meeting to look at a series of military field-constructed tanks across the state in addition to the 20 at Red Hill. Tufts reported Friday there are 31 in use and 15 that are temporarily or permanently out of use. The Navy is in the process of removing those that have not been used in a number of years, he said.

Toward the end of Friday's meeting, however, the conversation returned to the Red Hill leak. David Yomes, chairman of the Aliamanu/Salt Lake/Foster Village Neighborhood Board, said he's frustrated that the public continues to get mixed signals from government officials.

"The community is getting confused," Yomes said. "If the water is safe, let's put out the truth so the community doesn't have to be afraid."

Board of Water Supply Manager Ernest Lau said drinking water sources nearest the Red Hill petroleum tanks, which have been tested quarterly since the leak, have not shown signs of petroleum contamination.

However, he said, "The data is showing that the groundwater ... near the facility ... is showing signs of petroleum contamination and chemicals from petroleum."

He added, "Our concern is that at some point in the future, will this migration fuel that has leaked from the Red Hill facility, and may be leaking, be detected in our drinking water wells?"

April testing of monitoring well No. 2, the one nearest the tanks, showed levels of up to 5,250 parts per billion total petroleum hydrocarbon diesel, Lau said. The acceptable level is 4,500 parts per billion.

That same well also showed elevated levels during the time of the 2013-2014 leak, Lau said. "For whatever reason, and we don't know the answer and I'm not going to speculate, the level of diesel fuel contamination in that well has gone back up."

Navy officials interpreted the situation differently.

After the April spike they tested the well again in June and recorded levels of 3,800 parts per billion, and

then again in July and recorded levels of 3,900 and 3,200 parts per billion, said Aaron Poentis, director of the Navy's Regional Environmental Department.

Tufts appeared visibly uncomfortable with Lau's characterization of the water as contaminated.

"I would say there are traces of petroleum constituents under the tanks in the aquifer - not moving, not persistent and not going in the direction that groundwater flows, which is directly toward the Navy's drinking water shaft at Red Hill shaft 3,000 feet away," he said. "We have monitoring wells to make sure that those constituents aren't moving ... toward any drinking water source."

Tufts said naphthalene, one of the compounds that make up jet fuel, was detected in the monitoring well next to the tanks "one time in 2013. ... I don't know if that was from Red Hill or not."

The same monitoring well has been tested, as has drinking water from the nearby Navy water shaft, quarterly since that time, and "never has anybody been in any danger of having tainted drinking water. ... That's the inference I'm hearing, and that's just not a true statement," he added.

Lau and environmental organizations have objected to the agreement reached by the Navy, the EPA and the state Department of Health, arguing that it does too little over too long a period of time.

Red Hill fuel spill poses threat to water supply, officials conclude

Posted: Oct 30, 2015 10:53 PM HST Updated: Oct 31, 2015 8:26 AM HST

By Rick Daysog (HawaiiNewsNow) -

<http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/30399540/red-hill-water-contamination>

Nearly two years ago, when one of the Navy's Red Hill fuel tank leaked 27,000 gallons of jet fuel, officials were quick to conclude that the spill did not reach the area's water source.

"I have high degree of confidence that petroleum products from this incident have not migrated from the Red Hill tank facility towards the Red Hill well aquifer," Capt. Mike Williamson said in January 2014.

But on Friday, the head of the Honolulu Board of Water Supply said the contamination did in fact hit the aquifer and that readings from monitoring wells had spiked in April.

Ernie Lau, the board's manager and chief engineer, said that in April the monitoring well closest to the leaking tank detected fuel contamination levels higher than those recorded in January 2014 when the leak occurred.

What's unusual is that the tank had been empty for more than a 18 months.

"That indicates signs of petroleum contamination that is pretty high," said Lau. "The groundwater aquifer, which contains the water, is contaminated to various levels from petroleum contaminants below and near the facility."

Lau's comments came during a task force meeting on the Red Hill spill. The Navy recently reached an agreement with the state Health Department and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to upgrade its 20 fuel tanks on Red Hill, which hold more than 250 million gallons of fuel.

The aquifer is a large underground layer of water-bearing rock. The aquifers in the Moanalua and Halawa

provide up to 25 percent of the drinking water in urban Honolulu.

During a follow-up interview with Hawaii News Now, Lau said the fuel has not reached the Board of Water Supply's Halawa drinking water wells, which are about a mile away from the Red Hill Fuel Facility. But he said if more isn't done to contain the problem, the fuel could pose risks.

"Over the long term, possibly decades, there could be a movement of fuel in the ground water in the aquifer in our direction. That's a concern," Lau said.

Lau is urging the state and the Navy to place more monitoring wells near its Halawa wells to ensure that the fuel spill isn't migrating that way.

Added state Rep. Chris Lee, who is a member of the Red Hill Task Force and chairman of the House Environmental Protection Committee, "We don't know how far and how fast this is spreading so we just need to keep on top of it and make sure we take action before this enters our drinking water."

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Thanks!

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